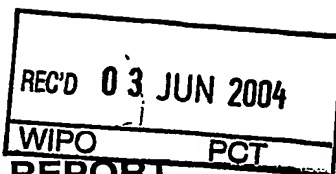


PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

PCT

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT (PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)



Applicant's or agent's file reference P4097	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/PEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/FI 03/00599	International filing date (day/month/year) 12.08.2003	Priority date (day/month/year) 13.08.2002
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC A01G13/02		
Applicant AHLSTROM RESEARCH AND SERVICES et al.		



- This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.
- This REPORT consists of a total of 4 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☐ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e. sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

 These annexes consist of a total of sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the opinion
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 10.03.2004	Date of completion of this report 01.06.2004
Name and mailing address of the international preliminary examining authority:  European Patent Office D-80298 Munich Tel. +49 89 2399 - 0 Tx: 523656 epmu d Fax: +49 89 2399 - 4465	Authorized Officer Lucchesi-Palli, C Telephone No. +49 89 2399-2093 

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/FI 03/00599

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the **elements** of the international application (*Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17)*):

Description, Pages

1-12 as originally filed

Claims, Numbers

1-19 filed with the demand

2. With regard to the **language**, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language: , which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of the international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rule 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any **nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence** disclosed in the international application, the international preliminary examination was carried out on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages:
☐ the claims, Nos.:
☐ the drawings, sheets:

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed (Rule 70.2(c)).

(Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report.)

6. Additional observations, if necessary:

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT**

International application No. PCT/FI 03/00599

**V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability;
citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Yes: Claims	1 - 19
	No: Claims	
Inventive step (IS)	Yes: Claims	1 - 19
	No: Claims	
Industrial applicability (IA)	Yes: Claims	1 - 19
	No: Claims	

2. Citations and explanations

see separate sheet

**INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY
EXAMINATION REPORT - SEPARATE SHEET**

International application No. PCT/FI03/00599

ad section V:

1. Novelty:

Claim 1 meets the requirements of article 33(2) PCT:

The closest prior art is considered to be the document D1, DE-A-3 816 865, the description, column 3, lines 6 to 49, disclosing a biodegradable fibrous support according to the preamble of claim 1. D1 does not disclose that the material of the grid is a biodegradable polymer from a chosen group as claimed in the second part of claim 1.

2. Inventive step:

Claim 1 meets the requirements of article 33(3) PCT:

The problem to be solved is developing a mulching support with a grid as known from D1 which is more resistant and 100% biodegradable. This is achieved by using the biodegradable polymer as claimed.

None of the cited prior art documents, in particular US-A-2 961 799 (D2) and FR-A-2 813 888 (D3) disclose the use of a biodegradable polymer. The man skilled in the art receives no indication from these documents to use the claimed polymers as a grid as D2 and D3 relate to liquid mulching compositions containing latex.

Dependent claims 2 to 19 relate to particular embodiments of the invention as claimed in claim 1 and fulfill thus the requirements set in the PCT.

3. The industrial applicability of the claimed subject matter in the field of mulching supports is evident (art. 33(4) PCT).

The description is not adapted to the claims (art. 6 PCT).